

Water and the Aquatic Ecosystems

“Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it.” (Norman Maclean—A River Runs Through It, and Other Stories)

In this session, there will be a discussion about identifying and managing important areas that affect the quality and quantity of water, including the aquatic ecosystems and the wetlands and riparian areas that support those systems. Also, isolated wetlands provide habitat for sustaining amphibians and reptiles, along with several bird species. Essentially, water is an important element for the survival of life- for fish passage, many aquatic species and their habitats, amphibians, birds, and other animals, including humans. The revision of the Francis Marion Forest Plan needs to consider and expand the management direction for water, aquatic ecosystems and the areas that support those systems.

First hour: If you come during the first hour, there will be a discussion about the definitions of the following: wetlands; riparian areas, tidal waterways, and isolated wetlands; rivers, streams, and floodplains. What are these special environments and how do they link with aquatic ecosystems? How can they be identified? Do you have any photographs of wetlands or riparian areas and can you locate those areas on maps? We will use the following maps to discuss where these water-related areas may occur: hydric soils (areas where soils are saturated with water), streams and rivers (updated using new information), marine terraces (areas of different elevations that affects water flow), locations of large and small floodplains. Finally, there will be a discussion about how the Francis Marion forest plan management direction for these areas might be structured.

Second hour, The next topic will concentrate on which watersheds should be a priority for restoration. What is watershed restoration? There will be a general discussion about how to restore a watershed, and then, the criteria and potential options for recommending which watersheds could be a priority for restoration. If you come during the second hour, bring photographs, maps or other information about examples of watershed restoration. A map of watershed boundaries has been updated using new information and will be used throughout the session.